

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 96 are pending in this application, and were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bonta et al. (U.S. 6,337,983).

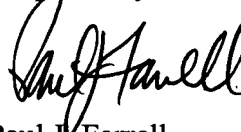
It is respectfully submitted that the earliest filing date of Bonta et al. is the filing date of its provisional application, namely June 21, 2000. The U.S. filing date of the present application is August 4, 1999. Therefore Bonta et al. is not prior art.

Based on at least the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-10 and 96 is respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Without conceding the patentability per se of dependent Claims 2-10 and 96, these are likewise believed to be allowable at least by virtue of their dependence on their respective independent claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of dependent Claims 2-10 and 96 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, all of the claims pending in the Application, namely, Claims 1-10 and 96, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference or personal interview would facilitate resolution of any remaining matters, the Examiner may contact Applicant's attorney at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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